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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9117  
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RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 4606  
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 1213  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 4993  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 5408  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 4629  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 3020  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 5394  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 2244  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0469  
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RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 1627  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 5706  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 7681  
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 0534  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0782  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 002520

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA  
HQ USAF FOR X0XX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

SIPDIS  
E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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[1](#)1. Mideast

[1](#)2. Iran

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Key stories in the media:  
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All media reported on a wave of layoffs in Israel, and quoted Finance Minister Roni Bar-On as saying that the man in the street won't pay for the tycoons' ills.

The media reported that yesterday the IDF killed four Hamas gunmen near the Gaza border. One Israeli soldier was lightly wounded in the action. Although Israel claims to remain committed to the lull (the tahdiya) with Hamas, the IDF has changed its tactics on the Gaza Strip border. In the past two weeks, IDF units have crossed into the Gaza Strip several times to strike at terrorists and foil potential attacks. A Hamas spokesman told HaQaretz that the group was not about to cancel the truce but intended to reexamine it. In response to the Israeli strike, Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired six mortar shells and two Qassam rockets at the western Negev, causing no injuries or damage. HaQaretz reported that defense sources told the daily that the army is now authorized to act within what the IDF calls the "security parameter" -- a several-hundred-meter strip beyond the border fence. The troops are allowed to act only against clear threats and with the approval of a senior commander.

The Jerusalem Post reported that foreign journalists are furious over an IDF dictate that bars them from entering Gaza, which they say was imposed with no formal notice.

The media reported that Iran has test-launched a new ground-to-ground ballistic missile with a 2,000 km range, which is capable of hitting Israel. HaQaretz and other media quoted Israeli experts as saying that the missile was entirely developed in Iran and that it attests to impressive technological capabilities. Maariv reported that Israel and Germany are developing a system for identifying nuclear missiles. Leading media reported that yesterday President Shimon Peres told the UN General Assembly that the 2002 Saudi initiative represents a "serious opening for real progress" on peace in the Middle East. Turning to the Arab leaders at the conference including Saudi King Abdullah -- Peres called for a renewal of the prophetic vision of peace and brotherhood. Israel Radio noted that Arab leaders made no reference to peace progress in the Middle East. Yediot reported that the Saudis turned a cold shoulder to Peres.

HaQaretz reported that J Street, a moderate new pro-Israel lobby that backed Barack Obama's presidential campaign, is worrying leaders of American Jewry's established, conservative AIPAC lobby.

The Jerusalem Post quoted Jerusalem Mayor-elect Nir Barkat as saying that he plans to invite ultra-Orthodox parties to join his broad-based coalition.

HaQaretz reported that Labor Party Chairman Ehud Barak has refused to promise Knesset members negotiating with Meretz about forming a new center-left party that Labor would not join a government headed by Likud Chairman Benjamin Netanyahu after the February elections. A senior Labor official told HaQaretz yesterday that the issue came up in talks conducted by Barak in the past two days aimed at preventing key Labor MKs such as Ami Ayalon, Ophir Pines-Paz, and Michael Melchior from joining the new Meretz initiative. After Barak's meetings with Ayalon and Pines-Paz on Tuesday night and Wednesday respectively, it appears both are likely to remain in Labor.

HaQaretz reported that Peace Now has petitioned the High Court of Justice against illegal digging and construction activity by the Israel Antiquities Authority, in cooperation with the right-wing association QElad-City of David, near the Western Wall and the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

HaQaretz reported that the state has petitioned the High Court of Justice over the IDF granting an incentive for law-breakers to take over Palestinian land in the territories. A law dating back to 1858 determines that land that was not visited by its owner for 10 years shall be confiscated. Maariv reported that yesterday the High Court of Justice issued a temporary order banning further construction and settling in an outpost near the settlement of Beit-El. The outpost is built on Palestinian land.

Leading media reported that yesterday the cabinet again rejected a decision to shield Israeli communities around Gaza.

Leading media reported that yesterday Syrian FM Walid Muallem suggested that IAF bombs may be the source of uranium traces that

diplomats at the IAEA said were found at a suspected nuclear site.

The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday in Bethlehem a PA QmilitaryQ court sentenced a Palestinian security agent to death by firing squad after finding him guilty of QcollaborationQ with Israel. The sentence, and other ones pronounced early this year, must be approved by PA President Mahmoud Abbas, who has thus far refrained from endorsing the verdicts.

HaQaretz reported that Netanyahu is counting on the votes of Russian Israelis and that he will give three of its representatives three secure slots on the LikudQs Knesset list.

Leading media reported that yesterday in Nablus the IDF arrested Samer Zubahi Kassam Mabruk, a senior member of the PFLP, alongside with two other PFLP men.

Leading media reported that the IDF has sentenced a soldier to 21 days in jail for yawning during a recent memorial service for assassinated prime minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Maariv ran a feature story about Dina Wein-Reis, an ultra-Orthodox woman moving between Israel and New York, who has embezzled money from over 500 American companies.

Israel Hayom presented the results of a poll it conducted in cooperation with New Wave Research, showing the IsraelisQ voting intentions (in Knesset seats; figures in brackets show the current Knesset seats):

Likud: 33 (12); Kadima: 28 (29); Labor Party: 11 (19); Shas: 10 (12); Arab parties: 10 (10); Yisrael Beiteinu: 7 (11); National Union Party and National-Religious Party 6 (6); Meretz: 4 (5); United Torah Judaism: 5 (6); Green Party 3 (0).

#### I. Mideast:

##### Summary:

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: QThose concerned about the well-being of the people of Gaza should put the pressure where it belongs -- and tell Hamas to stop the violence.

Yitzhak Bailey, who was adviser on ShiQite affairs in the Defense Ministry, wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv: QNow is the time to again point out the military and political advantages of returning fire.... It will change the increasingly contemptuous attitude toward Israel in the region.... It will help promote peace with the Palestinians.

##### Block Quotes:

#### I. "The Gaza QSiegeQ"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (11/13): QHere's what anyone who follows events in the Gaza Strip -- cursorily -- might reasonably conclude: An Israeli QSiege periodically leaves 1.5 million people hungry and in darkness. Innocents are Qcollectively punishedQ while the IDF capriciously QraidsQ Gaza killing Palestinians.... The truth is that Gaza's misfortunes are largely self-inflicted. Hamas has made battling Israel its highest priority regardless of the damage this causes Palestinian society -- its founding charter calls for the obliteration of the Jewish state. Paradoxically, Hamas remains immensely popular. In fact, some Israeli policymakers argue that it would be pointless for Israel to topple Hamas because the population is Hamas.... Plainly, Israel's Gaza strategy isn't working. Olmert himself thinks a Qcollision with Hamas is inevitable.Q Hamas has used the truce to further enhance its sophisticated subterranean supply lines. Advanced weaponry is brought in; so too, is everything from tobacco and sheep to car parts -- all taxed by Hamas's Qtunnels administration.Q So much diesel fuel has been flowing through pipelines under the Philadelphia Corridor that a glut on the market has reportedly been created. Only cement and iron can't easily be smuggled. What now? Israeli defense officials do not want the cease-fire to fall apart. At the same time, Jerusalem

is not willing to allow a creeping escalation of Hamas violence. If the Islamists end the cease-fire, the cost must be a relentless pursuit of their leaders so as to diminish the capacity of Hamas to govern. Over the long haul, Israel simply can't tolerate an Islamist regime anywhere between the Mediterranean and the Jordan that is dedicated to its destruction. Those concerned about the well-being of the people of Gaza should put the pressure where it belongs -- and tell Hamas to stop the violence.

## II. "Five Reasons to Return Fire at Gaza"

Yitzhak Bailey, who was adviser on ShiQite affairs in the Defense Ministry, wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (11/13): QOne thing is already clear: closing the crossings as a punishment for one day or a few days is doomed to fail. As refugees, the majority of Gaza's residents are accustomed to shortages and are capable of managing with little. Economic distress will not get them to raise their voices against the Qassam rocket fire.... Now is the time to again point out the military and political advantages of returning fire: It puts a quick end to the rocket fire phenomenon.... It will lessen the scope of the smuggling. It will remove the need for a ground operation.... It will change the increasingly contemptuous attitude toward Israel in the region.... It will help promote peace with the Palestinians. A determined image of Israel will make it easier for the moderate Palestinians to make peace with it, and a display of Israeli capability in eradicating the fire by ourselves will also increase the belief of Israelis in the chances of reaching peace with security.

## 12. Iran:

### Summary:

Military correspondent Yuval Limor, who holds a similar position on Israel TV, wrote in the independent Israel Hayom: QYesterdayQs Iranian announcement ... clarifies to those who wish to avoid the use of force that they will eventually have to use many times as much force in order to thwart the greatest threat currently menacing world peace.

### Block Quotes:

#### QA Finger in ObamaQs Eye

Military correspondent Yuval Limor, who holds a similar position on Israel TV, wrote in the independent Israel Hayom (11/13): QThe Iranian announcement about a test of a dual-stage solid fuel missile should not worry Israel, if only because that announcement is not worrisome -Q on the contrary, the fact that this is a real and tangible threat is first and foremost meant to worry the Western world, which must wake up and at last understand what it is facing.... Barack Obama was elected just last week. The administration in Tehran is already poking a finger in his eye. While Obama is moderately talking about a critical dialogue and Washington is encouraging the opening of an American interests section in Tehran, Iran is broadcasting business as usual. One must hope that after the election turmoil in Israel and in the U.S. subsides, the West will succeed in establishing a clear and firm strategy vis-`-vis Iran with defined sticks. YesterdayQs Iranian announcement shows that there is no choice, and clarifies to those who wish to avoid the use of force that they will eventually have to use many times as much force in order to thwart the greatest threat currently menacing world peace.

CUNNINGHAM